



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

Date: May 27, 2014

To: Council Member Cam Gordon, Chair, Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee

Referral to: City Council

Subject: **Blueprint For Equitable Engagement**

Recommendation: To direct NCR staff and the NCEC to report back to the City Council by December 1st, 2014 with a summary of the findings, draft recommendations and performance measures regarding the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement.

Previous Directives: None

Department Information

Prepared by: David M Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations Department Director

Approved by:

David Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations Director _____

City Coordinator _____

Presenters in Committee: David M Rubedor, NCR and Ishmael Israel, Neighborhood Community Engagement Commission Chair

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Community Impact:

Supporting Information:

Overview: The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is a multi-year strategic action plan to ensure *an equitable community engagement system* for the City of Minneapolis.

The City's Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) department and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) are utilizing an engagement strategy consistent with the City's adopted Core Principles of Engagement to create the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement to ensure the City's engagement efforts are equitable in their approach and implementation. An equitable engagement system ensures that all community voices are

sought and valued and that policy makers and elected officials have input and feedback from all community members when making decisions.

A Focused Approach: The NCR department and the NCEC have been working on this effort for the past couple of years. Although progress has been made, the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement Steering Committee recently changed the approach to provide clarity and intentionality to the action plan. Listed below is a summary of the changes made:

1. Change the name to reflect the actual work. The Steering Committee felt that the previous name – Blueprint for Equity - was too broad and as a result too confusing. We have changed the name to better reflect a focused approach on engagement: **Blueprint for Equitable Engagement.**
2. Tell our story better. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is evolving and fluid. Our work will be informed through engagement with community over an extended period of time. However, we have taken a number of successful action steps already and we must always remind ourselves and others of the work already completed.
3. Summarize in a Concept Paper: In order to help articulate the Blueprint, we have developed a Blueprint for Equitable Engagement Concept paper. This is intended to be a living document that will grow over time. This will be a resource for community, neighborhoods, elected officials, NCEC and the NCR department.
4. Be action oriented: We are calling this a ***strategic action plan*** with the intentional results. We have established a timeline to help track the work, establish expectations and hold ourselves accountable for completing tasks.
5. This is a collaborative effort between the NCEC and the NCR: Following a similar model as with the 2014 Community Connections Conference, this is a joint effort between the NCEC and the NCR with the intention of allowing flexibility, reduced process and focused on actionable results.

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement focuses in the following areas of the City's engagement activities:

1. Neighborhood organizations: We aim to help neighborhood organizations assess whether or not their outreach efforts, board decision making processes and distribution of resources is being conducted with a lens of equity and inclusion. The City intends to include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community. With access to local political, social and financial resources, neighborhoods are able to utilize millions of dollars annually and become central places of empowerment for marginalized community members;

2. City's board and commissions: The City has a goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity in the community. The City Council charged both the NCR department and the NCEC with making recommendations on the best way to achieve this goal. Recommendations have been developed and are in either being considered or implemented.
3. City enterprise outreach and engagement. The NCR department supports the community engagement efforts of City departments and connects this work with the efforts stated above.

The NCR department's Access and Outreach team will support the aforementioned efforts. The Access and Outreach team has staff dedicated to ensuring that equitable engagement practices are utilized where cultural norms and/or practices, language and disability create barriers. Specific initiatives that support equitable engagement include ADA support, the Latino Engagement Task Force and the American Indian Memorandum of Understanding. The department has initiatives to strengthen engagement with the Southeast Asian, East African and African American communities in 2014.

Work Completed To Date:

1. One Minneapolis Fund: This small grant fund administered by the NCEC supports leadership development in cultural communities and connects new leaders with the City's engagement system. Recently, many newly engaged residents who were informed by One Minneapolis Fund Grantees of the importance of City engagement ran for their neighborhood boards, eight of which were elected as of May, 2014.
2. Neighborhood Priority Plans: Through the Community Participation Programs (CPP), neighborhoods are required to identify priorities and coordinate activities directly with governmental partners, including the City of Minneapolis. This newly implemented process directly connects neighborhood organizations with City staff early in the planning phase, helping to align resources, establish expectations and build better relationships.
3. City Board and Commission Diversity and Representation
 - a. **Streamlined Appointment Process for City Boards and Commissions**: The NCR department, in collaboration with the City Clerk's office, worked with the City Council to coordinate all appointments to the City's boards and commissions twice per year, increasing awareness, understanding and ease of access for interested residents.
 - b. **Increased Outreach**: The NCR department utilizes its existing engagement networks to inform residents of vacancies on our boards and commission, resulting in an increase in the number of applications.

- c. **City Academy:** This annual five week course teaches residents about the operations of the City and serves as capacity building tool for prospective board and commission appointees. The program has run for two years now with 55 graduates.
 - d. **BCLI and other Community Partnerships:** Nexus Community Partners (Nexus') Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute (BCLI) is a seven-month leadership program that supports, trains, and places people of color and other underrepresented community members on priority, publicly appointed municipal boards and commissions that influence and impact equity in economic development, employment, health, housing and transportation in the Twin Cities Metro Area. In 2014, the first year of this program, 12 people graduated. The NCR department works with Nexus to connect graduates to Minneapolis' boards and commissions.
 - e. **Boards and Commissions Diversity Survey:** Every two years, the department conducts a diversity survey to track the composition of our boards and commissions. The survey measures a variety of diversity indicators such as age, income, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender and more.
 - f. **Appointment Process Recommendations:** In 2013, the NCR department and the NCEC recommended that the City Council adopt procedures for the appointment process modeled after the City's two most diverse commissions – The Workforce Council and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. The department is currently working with the City Clerk's office to operationalize this recommendation.
4. Community Connections Conference: The conference is an annual gathering of neighborhood and cultural organizations for the purposes of 1) sharing experiences and best practices; 2) Facilitating connections between organizations; and 3) supporting stronger relationships with the City of Minneapolis. Two conferences have been held to date with about 500 people attending in 2014.
5. Equitable Solutions: The NCR department is part of the City's internal work team developing tools support equitable engagement by city departments. This effort is called Equitable Solutions which helps City departments consider equity implications of their budgeting, business plan, and program development and implementation.

Upcoming Focus Group Discussions

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is being developed in accordance to the City's adopted Core Principles of Community Engagement. The Blueprint is being developed with an engagement strategy that utilizes both internal and community expertise. A series of focus groups are being scheduled with community stakeholders. It is our intent to involve these stakeholders so that we better understand the opportunities, challenges and barriers with our existing engagement system and to be informed about options and approaches that can help the City achieve its goal. We will work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood, considered and incorporated in our recommendations. We will also report back to the community about the process and how input is being utilized.

In addition to informing our recommendations and decisions, the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement will foster new relationship and support on-going dialogues with our engagement partners.

The following is a list of upcoming focus groups discussions. Additional focus groups may be added after completing the following:

1. City Council's HECE and NCEC community meetings (2)
2. Intermedia Arts and Creative City Making
3. OAP and its collaborative partners (including Nexus)
4. Neighbors Organized for Change (NOC)
5. African American Leadership Forum
6. Latino Engagement Task Force
7. Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, the Senior Advisory Committee, and the Senior Skyway Center
8. One Minneapolis Fund grantees
9. Three (3) Neighborhood organizations focus groups organized in alignment with existing NCEC districts.
10. Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors
11. Lao Assistance Center of MN, Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association, and United Cambodian Association of Minnesota
12. Somali Citizens League, Somali American Network and/or Somali Action Alliance
13. LGBTQ Community
14. Homeless Community Organizations
15. Renters (Homeline)
16. Youth, Urban Scholars

Timeline

1. Upcoming Focus Groups: Focus group conversations and dialogue will be conducted in the summer of 2014 with an anticipated completion date of September, 30, 2014. Recommendations from these discussions will be considered by the department and the NCEC in the fall of 2014.
2. Boards and Commission recommendations: The department will be working with City Clerk's office to further operationalize the recommended changes in the City's appointment process during the summer of 2014.
3. Boards and Commissions Diversity Survey. The next survey will be completed in July, 2014. Further efforts to increase voluntary participation will be employed.
4. The NCR and NCEC will report back to the City Council by December 1st, 2014 with the findings, draft recommendations and possible measurements identified in this engagement process.

Blueprint for Equitable Engagement Steering Committee: Brittany Lewis, NCEC Commissioner and Steering Committee Convener; David Rubedor, Director, NCR; Lance Knuckles, Access and Outreach Manager, NCR; Ishmael Israel, NCEC Commission Chair; Jeffrey Strand, NCEC Commissioner; Andy Hortillosa, NCEC Commissioner.